

REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

We hereby submit to the Board of Selectmen and the citizens of Alton, the Report of the Budget Committee of the Town of Alton.

The Budget Committee has the responsibility as overseers of the Town's operational expenses and capital investments. Our function, our mandate, is to be the Town's advocate to ask questions and review Department budgets, a very time consuming and sometimes-arduous process.

With the Board of Selectmen's recommendations in hand, we meet with every Town official who is charged with expending tax dollars and listen to their goals as proposed. The Budget Committee will address each department head's line item as presented for any further explanation and/or justification. We review each individual expenditure or warrant article. Each item must be justified. Irrespective of what has been expended or approved in the past. This is known as Zero Cost Budgeting.

At subsequent meetings, we again address every department's line expenditures to change or recommend the Board of Selectmen's number. The department head will then be informed by the Town Administrator of our recommendation. We conduct additional meetings if a department head is not satisfied with the Budget Committee's recommendation. We never turn down a request and will again listen and discuss items and then revote the items that have been appealed. This year we made a number of changes based upon this process.

In January the Budget Committee meets to vote on the entire budget and warrant articles. Also in January, we conduct a Public Hearing for voters input and again in February at the Deliberative Session for continued discussion and amendment. On March 14, 2006 the Town electorate will vote the final budget and warrant articles.

The Budget committee and Board of Selectmen have jointly agreed to an operating budget of \$5,310,597. The Budget Committee has voted to not recommend a donation to the Youth Services Bureau of \$19,975, and a reimbursement to Linwood Drive homeowners for legal fees of \$25,070(amended at the Deliberative Session to \$0). We have recommended the remainder of the warrant articles totaling \$1,793,728. The total budget recommended is \$7,104,325. The difference between our operating budget and the default budget of \$5,173,527 is \$137,070, an amount that would not critically affect Town services or Town government. That being said, the final operating budget is the amount of money needed to keep our Town unique and special.

We are fortunate and blessed to have the most professional and caring department heads and Town officials in the Lakes region. On behalf of the Budget Committee, thank you each and every one for putting Alton first and putting individual politics and personal agendas aside for the benefit of the Town.

Our thanks and appreciations are extended to Greg Fuller for his 12 years of dedicated service and leadership. Thank you also to John Brooks for his wisdom, courage and patience with the next generation of committee members. We will surely miss you both.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Miller, Chairman

Laurie Boyce, Vice Chairman

William Curtin, Member

R. Virgil MacDonald, Member

John Brooks, Member

Gregory Fuller, Member

A. Pete Shibley, Selectmen's Representative

Daniel LaCroix, School Board Representative